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Security Council

Sixtieth year

Provisional

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Thursday, 13 October 2005, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Motoc	(Romania)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Argentina	Mr. García Moritán
	Benin	Mr. Idohou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mrs. Patterson

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

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05-55255 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I understand that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 37 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Adeniji (Nigeria) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Said Djinnit, Commissioner of the African Union Commission.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Djinnit to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend invitations under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Pierre Schori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, and to Mr. António Monteiro, High Representative of the Secretary-General for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Schori to take a seat at the Council table.

I invite Mr. Monteiro to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I should like to acknowledge the presence at this meeting of His Excellency Mr. Omar Bashir Manis, the current Chairman of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and of Mr. Mojanku Gumbi and Mr. Silumko Sokupa, representing the African Union Mediator.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2005/639, containing the text of a letter dated 6 October 2005 from the representative of Nigeria addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, His Excellency Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji; the Commissioner of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Mr. Said Djinnit; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Pierre Schori; and the High Representative of the Secretary-General for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. António Monteiro.

I now give the floor to Mr. Adeniji.

Mr. Adeniji (Nigeria): I would like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I would also like to thank you and the other members of the Council for having given me this opportunity to address you on the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. This is an issue which has repeatedly appeared on the agenda of the Council in the past two years, and one that has been a source of great preoccupation to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU). It is a subject with regard to which we have witnessed, alternately, periods of great expectation and periods of great anxiety — anxiety for

Africa in general, but particularly for the West African region, whose States, because of their proximity to Côte d'Ivoire and their strong economic and cultural links, are very vulnerable to the effects of developments in that country.

Today, as over the past few weeks, Côte d'Ivoire is witnessing one of the cyclical periods of anxiety. But this time it is potentially explosive, in particular because of the impossibility of meeting the deadline for the transition phases envisaged in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. That situation and the need for anticipatory actions to avert a catastrophe that could set back the entire West African region by several years, if not decades, account for the flurry of activities — one phase of which is culminating in the appearance before the Council today of an AU delegation that I have the privilege to lead.

This Council is well aware of the commendable efforts and the significant resources that the South African President, acting on the authority of the African Union, has devoted to the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire in the past nine months or so. Both ECOWAS and the African Union have paid well-deserved tributes to President Thabo Mbeki. Obviously, considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis, Accra and Pretoria agreements during the mediation period of the South African President.

Notwithstanding the progress, when it started to become clear that the transition period — which was expected to end with the holding of elections on 30 October 2005 — could not be completed, it became urgently necessary to consider how to manage the post-30-October arrangements. Thus, at the initiative of President Obasanjo, Chairman of the African Union, a meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council at the level of heads of State or Government was convened in New York at the margins of the General Assembly on 14 September 2005.

During the course of its deliberations, the Peace and Security Council received a report from President Thabo Mbeki, the Mediator, who also happened to be the Chairman of the Council for that month. After that very clear and lengthy exposé, the Peace and Security Council expressed concern that, notwithstanding the tireless efforts of the AU Mediator, the Ivorian parties had not demonstrated the necessary political will for the full implementation of the agreements reached on the outstanding issues, particularly the dismantling and disarmament of the militias, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes and the creation of conditions for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections. The Peace and Security Council underlined the need to review the situation in Côte d'Ivoire before 30 October 2005, and requested ECOWAS to convene urgently at the summit level to assess the situation and report thereon at a meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council to be convened urgently at the summit level to consider the matter and decide accordingly.

Thus, in view of the urgency of the issue, ECOWAS convened an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on 30 September 2005, in Abuja, to consider the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the developments that would have to be put in place post-30 October. The ECOWAS Summit made far-reaching recommendations that were submitted to a meeting of the Peace and Security Council, which itself was held within a week of the Abuja Summit, on 6 October 2005.

The recommendations of ECOWAS were, by and large, the basis for the adoption of its own decision by the Peace and Security Council at the 6 October meeting, but I will not elaborate on those recommendations. However, the result of the summit of the AU Peace and Security Council is, of course, what the AU delegation has brought to submit formally to the Council this afternoon, in accordance with paragraph 14 of the Peace and Security Council's communiqué that reads "Decides to submit this decision to the United Nations Security Council to obtain its support ..." (*S/2005/639, Annex*).

That decision, and a brief synthesis of its main points, I shall leave to the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Djinnit, to present to you very succinctly. I should like, however, to call attention to one important aspect of the decision that concerns the request of the AU Peace and Security Council to the United Nations Security Council — a request which is not being made for the first time, I daresay — to consider a substantial increase in the strength of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI). That request is particularly germane in a period which is fast approaching when it is envisaged and hoped that we will witness increased activities in Côte d'Ivoire, linked to the disbanding and disarmament of the militias and, not least, the conduct of free, fair,

transparent and credible presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire.

The current authorized troop level of ONUCI is, I believe, just over 7,000. Now, please believe me, speaking as a former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, that this is far too low a number for the level required if a credible disarmament in Côte d'Ivoire is desired. Thus, the AU expects and hopes that this United Nations Security Council's resolution on the AU Peace and Security Council's report, which Mr. Djinnit will succinctly, but in some detail, present to you, will be adopted quickly so that between now and the end of October we can put all the structures into place that will be absolutely essential for the post-30 October governance of the country. We hope that this same resolution will include a firm commitment on the increase of ONUCI.

In conclusion, it is needless to say that the clock is ticking towards the 30 October date and there are many steps to be taken on the ground in Côte d'Ivoire, not only to enable us who are present to have all the parties in Côte d'Ivoire accept the decision of the Peace and Security Council — a decision which will hopefully be endorsed by the United Nations Security Council — but also to be able to make a firm commitment for the decision's implementation, as that is really a key issue in Côte d'Ivoire. We are not short of agreements — we have had a series of agreements on the Côte d'Ivoire situation, to which all the main parties have subscribed — but when it comes to the implementation stage, this is another story. Nevertheless, we hope that this time, with the collaboration of all concerned, with the great involvement of ECOWAS and the AU and, of course, the United Nations, we are optimistic that the story will be different.

What is important at this stage is that the Security Council demonstrate the sense of urgency that has characterized the speed with which, at the African level, ECOWAS and the AU Peace and Security Council — even at the level of heads of State or Government — have been able to get together to do their own part at this preliminary stage in the resolution of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

The President: I now give the floor to the Commissioner of the African Union Commission, Mr. Said Djinnit.

Mr. Djinnit: Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the Security Council presidency for the month of October and to further convey the appreciation of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU) for providing this opportunity for the Commission to brief the Security Council on the conclusions of the 40th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on Côte d'Ivoire.

The fact that we are meeting together here today, following the meeting of the Peace and Security Council, bears eloquent testimony to our common resolve to promote and enhance coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations.

As all Security Council members are aware, and as recalled by Mr. Adeniji, the initiative to convene an urgent meeting in New York of the Peace and Security Council on 14 September at the head of State and Government level, at the initiative of Nigerian President Obasanjo, was taken against the background of the slow progress in the implementation of agreements and the resulting threat to the peace process, particularly in view of the fact that the holding of elections on 30 October 2005 was no longer feasible.

At that meeting, the Peace and Security Council decided that the Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) should convene urgently to assess the situation with respect to the problems of the implementation of the outstanding agreements and report to a meeting of the Peace and Security Council, to be convened urgently at the summit level, with the participation of ECOWAS leaders, to consider the matter and decide accordingly.

The ECOWAS Summit met on 30 September and formulated a set of recommendations that were considered by the Peace and Security Council at its meeting held on 6 October at the level of heads of State or Government, with the participation of ECOWAS leaders and the United Nations, among others.

Based on the ECOWAS recommendations and taking into account the efforts made by ECOWAS leaders, the AU Mediation and the United Nations on the one hand, and the concerns expressed by all the Ivorian parties on the other, the Peace and Security Council endeavoured to provide an African perspective

to the efforts aimed at addressing the challenges confronting the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. After its deliberations, the Peace and Security Council agreed on the following.

Regarding the period after 30 October 2005, the Peace and Security Council decided that the arrangements agreed upon in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement shall continue from 31 October 2005 for a period not exceeding 12 months and that, first, President Gbagbo shall remain Head of State during the aforementioned period. Secondly, it agreed that a new Prime Minister acceptable to all the Ivorian parties signatories to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement shall be appointed; the Government which he will lead shall be composed of personalities proposed by the Ivorian parties signatories to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. Thirdly, it agreed that the Ivorian parties shall be invited, as soon as possible, to a forum for national dialogue in Yamoussoukro; that meeting, which shall be open to civil society, including the traditional leaders and the private sector, shall be co-chaired by President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa.

Regarding the international community's role in and support for the peace process, the Peace and Security Council decided, first, to reaffirm President Mbeki in his role as AU Mediator. Secondly, it decided on the establishment of an international working group at ministerial level to be chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria in his capacity as Chair of the AU. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS in Côte d'Ivoire and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission in Côte d'Ivoire shall serve as secretariat, which shall be coordinated by the United Nations. Thirdly, it decided that the day-to-day mediation shall be undertaken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the High Representative of the Secretary-General for elections in Côte d'Ivoire, the Special Envoy of South Africa, the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission in Côte d'Ivoire. The mediation group shall be chaired by the Special Envoy of South Africa, as the representative of the AU Mediator.

Regarding the specific role of the United Nations, the Peace and Security Council affirmed its support for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) and requested the Security Council to provide ONUCI with all necessary means to enable it effectively discharge its mandate, and to further consider authorizing a substantial increase of its strength. It reaffirmed its support for individual measures provided for in paragraphs 9 and 11 of Security Council resolution 1572 (2004) of 15 November 2004 and subsequent resolutions relevant to the commitments made by the Ivorian parties.

Finally, the Peace and Security Council decided to dispatch a high-level delegation to Côte d'Ivoire comprising President Olusegun Obasanjo, Chairman of the AU, and President Thabo Mbeki, AU Mediator, to meet with President Gbagbo and other Ivorian parties with respect to the implementation of its decision.

At this crucial juncture in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, we cannot ignore the significant gains achieved so far. Yet neither should we underestimate the difficulties ahead, as we are quite familiar with the fact that the non-implementation of agreements had become a perennial state of play in Côte d'Ivoire. In adopting its decision on 6 October 2005, the Peace and Security Council aimed at injecting new impetus into the peace process through greater determination and involvement by the international community and greater support for and pressure on the Ivorian parties in the implementation of their commitments and obligations.

Before concluding, I should like to share with members of the Security Council the following observations.

First, the Ivorian parties and the international community need to take full advantage of the period not exceeding 12 months to address all outstanding issues, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the disarmament and dismantling of militias and the creation of conditions for the organization of free, fair and transparent elections. This requires the adoption as soon as possible of a tight calendar of implementation.

Secondly, members of the international community need to work hand in hand, and the Security Council needs to convey a strong signal to the Ivorian parties concerning the determination and cohesion of the international community.

Thirdly, there is a need to strengthen the role and presence of the United Nations, both in terms of providing UNOCI with all the necessary means to enable it discharge its mandate effectively and in terms of strengthening the authority of the High Representative for elections in Côte d'Ivoire in order to enable him to organize credible elections.

Fourthly, the parties need to comply strictly with their commitments and obligations, and the international community needs to show greater determination to exert the necessary pressure and sanctions against defaulting parties.

In conclusion, I would like to invite the members of the Security Council to support the decision of the 40th meeting of the Peace and Security Council and to take all other necessary measures aimed at further advancing the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire and thus contribute to the restoration of peace in that country, a peace which is anxiously awaited not only by the people of Côte d'Ivoire but by the region and the continent as a whole.

The President: I thank Mr. Said Djinnit for his briefing and for the kind words he addressed to the presidency.

I now give the floor to Mr. Pierre Schori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Schori: In formulating a new way forward for the peace process, the Addis Ababa summit, which was preceded by the Abuja summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has given hope to the people of Côte d'Ivoire. It has also helped to dispel some of the uncertainty about what would happen after 30 October. However, the Ivorian leaders are yet to embrace the new path to peace and to bury their deep-rooted mutual distrust and suspicion. At the same time, several major challenges stand in the way of sustainable peace and security. Let me offer a few brief observations from the field, so to speak.

In the whole of Côte d'Ivoire there is too much anxiety and fear in the air and too many Kalashnikovs in the streets. Rampant insecurity seems to be the order of the day. This results from continued violations of human rights; threats to foreigners, especially to ECOWAS citizens; intimidation of political opponents; and repeated obstruction of the impartial forces' freedom of movement. The stalemate in the processes of dismantling the militias, of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and of the preparations for elections, as well as the aggressive media environment, are other reasons for the insecure situation.

The latest human rights report of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), covering the period May to July 2005, which was released five days ago in Abidjan, makes gruesome reading. The report depicts in detail numerous human rights violations committed with increasing frequency by elements of the Government-controlled defence and security forces, military elements of the Forces nouvelles, armed and unarmed militia associated with either side of the Ivorian conflict, and criminals. The lack of rule of law has taken root.

The perpetrators of those violations have thus far enjoyed near-total impunity for the gross human rights violations that they inflict upon a defenceless population. That makes it difficult for ONUCI human rights and police officers to identify the individual perpetrators of the serious human rights violations that they discover daily in the course of their work. Human rights offenders apprehended by the impartial forces in the zone of confidence are, as a rule, released without further action by the authorities.

Serious violations of the fundamental human rights of Ivorian citizens are both a cause and a consequence of the political and military crisis in Côte d'Ivoire since September 2002. Sustained efforts by the international community to achieve lasting peace and promote national reconciliation will prove incomplete unless decisive action is taken to end the culture of impunity for serious human rights violations.

In that regard, I would like to emphasize the call by the Secretary-General to the Security Council to urgently consider the report of the International Commission of Inquiry into allegations of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in Côte d'Ivoire. The report covers the period from 19 September 2002 to 16 October 2004, and was transmitted to the Council by the Secretary-General on 23 December 2004.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General before the Council (S/2005/604), efforts by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to restore and maintain a secure and stable environment in the country have been severely hindered by the

ent obstruction of the impartial forces' freedom ovement and operation. Since the incidents in ma and Agboville in July, more than 60 cases of iction to UNOCI's freedom of movement have egistered. The majority of them have occurred in Government-controlled southern part of the ry. As a result, UNOCI is developing a more ive strategy aimed at preventing and curbing cases of obstruction, which includes steps taken highest political and military levels and nation- public information campaigns to better promote le and mandate of the mission in Côte d'Ivoire.

The proliferation of militia groups in various of the country has also seriously hampered the n's efforts to enhance security, especially in of the close association of those groups with al forces. A few first steps have been taken to ntle and disarm the militias. Unfortunately, the ss lacks the necessary transparency and ility.

Preparations for the disarmament and bilization of combatants have progressed cantly. The construction and rehabilitation of ament, demobilization and reintegration sites een completed in 70 per cent of areas controlled e Forces nouvelles, in the north, and in 95 nt of Government-controlled areas. However, the encement of the process is still being held e by the demand of the Forces nouvelles that the on of identification should first be adequately ed. In an effort to break that stalemate, UNOCI oposed a step-by-step approach starting with the nionment of combatants in the villages of Bouna Bondoukou, on opposing sides of the zone of fence, as a prelude to the dismantling and ing of the militias. All outstanding political , including identification, would be addressed in el.

Mr. Monteiro will report to the Council on the ations for the elections. Progress in those ations will also depend upon the creation of ate political and security conditions to allow for fered humanitarian access, freedom of movement mpaigning throughout the country.

n considering the report of the summit meeting e African Union just presented to the Security il, Council members may wish to pay urgent on to the following points, in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the Addis Ababa decisions. In that connection, the following steps could be considered.

First, the conclusions of the African Union Summit should be endorsed, so as to send a strong message about the need to preserve and reinforce the international community's unity of purpose and action.

Secondly, the urgent convening of the meeting of the international working group aimed at defining a new timetable, with key benchmarks, for the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Pretoria Agreement should be encouraged. That could be linked to automatic imposition of targeted sanctions.

Thirdly, in order not to delay the implementation process, the Prime Minister and his, or her, Government should be in place as soon as possible.

Fourthly, noting that the mandate of the National Assembly ends in December 2005, timely recommendations should be made on the role of the legislature thereafter.

Fifthly, Presidents Obasanjo and Mbeki should be supported in their forthcoming visit to Côte d'Ivoire, in order to secure the commitment of all Ivorian leaders to implementing the Addis Ababa decision.

Finally, there is a need to clarify the role of the United Nations, given the critical and concrete tasks it is expected to perform in support of the implementation of key aspects of the peace process. With the current mistrust among Ivorian leaders, I personally also believe that UNOCI's impartiality can significantly help shape and implement a proactive and forward-looking agenda for the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire.

In closing, I would like to say that I could hardly have failed to come here today, given that a couple of days ago thousands of people accompanied me on the way to the airport. It was young patriots who accompanied me; it was overjoyed Ivorians celebrating their country's successful qualification for soccer's World Cup matches, to be held in Germany next year. They showed tremendous unity, pride and hope in their country. I think that also gives us hope. At the same time, we are now seeing unique unity in the international community as regards Côte d'Ivoire. Let us therefore join those two "spirits" of unity, in Côte d'Ivoire and here, and help the people of Côte d'Ivoire move forward.

The President: I thank Ambassador Schori for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. António Monteiro, High Representative of the Secretary-General for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Monteiro: I would like to congratulate you and your country, Mr. President, on your assumption of your difficult functions for this month. I wish you every success in your role.

As the Council is aware, the mandate of the High Representative of the Secretary-General for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire envisaged the holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential elections on 30 October, as a solution to the crisis in the country. But my first observation during my exploratory mission to the country, from 8 to 18 August, was that there was a total absence of any real progress in the implementation of the agreements reached. Inevitable delays in the implementation of the electoral timetable cast reasonable doubts on the possibility of holding a credible presidential ballot on 30 October, given the sequence of events of which the Council is aware.

But during that exploratory mission, my very first task was to try to remove the objections raised by the opposition concerning the presidential decisions of 15 July regarding the new Independent Electoral Commission and the questions of identification and naturalization. After I asked President Thabo Mbeki, the African Union's Mediator, to intervene with President Gbagbo, new presidential decrees were issued on 29 August confirming the key role of the Commission in conducting the electoral process and clarifying questions regarding nationality, identification and naturalization — issues that constitute a fundamental aspect of the Ivorian crisis. On the same day, the Secretary General of the Forces nouvelles appointed their six representatives to the new Independent Electoral Commission, thereby ending the opposition's refusal to participate that had persisted up until then.

My second task was to ask for the completion of nominations for members to the new Commission to assist with the Constitutional Council.

By giving all Ivorian political actors the assurance of impartiality and objectivity — the fundamental basis for the creation of the post of High Representative as an exceptional measure — I have always underlined to my interlocutors that it was necessary for them to commit truthfully to the electoral process. Elections must be conducted by the Ivorians themselves, respecting the laws of the country, adjusted to the agreements already signed.

After the composition of the independent electoral commission was finalized, additional time was needed to allow for the application of all legal formalities and to resolve an issue of multiple nominations by one party. On 29 September, the President of the Republic signed a decree establishing the new Independent Electoral Commission, which will also fill a gap, serving as the basis for regular dialogue among all political forces.

Today, I have just received a letter from the Minister for Territorial Administration, informing me that next Monday, there will be an official swearing-in ceremony for the members of the Independent Electoral Commission and that the first meeting, which will be devoted to the election of its bureau, is to be held on 19 October.

It is my intention to participate actively in the work of the Independent Electoral Commission by providing advice and guidance to prevent and resolve any difficulty that might jeopardize the holding of open, free, fair and transparent elections. It is also my proposal to signal any violations.

I also plan to work closely with the Constitutional Council, whose powers include verification of the legitimacy of candidates for the presidential and legislative elections, the resolution of disputes relating to the election of the President of the Republic and the members of the National Assembly, and the announcement of the final results of the presidential elections.

In preparing for the elections, I have already requested UNOCI, together with my Office, to establish contacts with the Institut National de Statistiques, the Office Nationale d'Identification and the Commission Nationale de Supervision de l'Identification (CNSI). All of these are agencies that are working to prepare the elections. All the work already undertaken will be discussed later with the Electoral Commission.

The Electoral Division of UNOCI is already deploying the expected 120 United Nations Volunteers, who will serve as electoral advisers throughout Côte

d'Ivoire. They are establishing initial contacts with local authorities.

Thus, the path is open for the organization of elections. The main objective is now for the new Independent Electoral Commission to define a road map with precise benchmarks that must be adhered to in good faith. This would make it easier to identify possible deadlocks or any attempt to manipulate the process.

From all the tasks of the Commission, the most delicate will be the identification question and the criteria for voter eligibility. It will be necessary to make the legislation as simple and as clear as possible in order to allow to all those participating in the preparation of the register of voters to act in an impartial, standard and objective manner.

I have been exploring with political leaders the idea that the voters' cards to be used in these elections, which must have a photograph and a fingerprint, could serve as the basic legal document to facilitate the process of obtaining additional identity papers and the new identification card.

The electoral work can proceed effectively only in an environment with adequate security throughout the country. Freedom of movement and freedom of thought are indispensable to guarantee truly democratic elections accepted by all. This is the responsibility of the armed forces that control the two parts of the divided country and the effective monitoring of the impartial forces of UNOCI and Operation Licorne. Naturally, the ideal is to complete, as Mr. Schori just underlined, the entire process of disarmament and dismantling of the militias.

To conclude, one point: the proposal made by the African Union to the Security Council for a period not exceeding 12 months is largely sufficient for the preparing and holding free and fair elections.

The President: I thank Mr. Monteiro for his briefing and the kind words he addressed to me.

I now give the floor to the representative of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Djangoné-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting to consider the Secretary-General's sixth progress report on developments in Côte d'Ivoire and on the United Nations Operations there, pursuant to Council resolution 1603 (2005) of 3 June 2005 (S/2005/604). I would like to thank members of the Council for their constant interest in Côte d'Ivoire, which is evident from the public meetings devoted to the situation in my country.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Oluyemi Adenidji, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nigeria, and Mr. Said Djinnit, Commissioner of the African Union Commission, for having travelled here specially to brief the Security Council on developments in the African Union Mediation and, in particular, to report on the 40th meeting of the Peace and Security Council, held at Addis Ababa on 6 October.

I would like to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria, for his personal involvement, and to the Mediator of the African Union, Mr. Mbeki, for his tireless efforts as they help us to look for a peaceful solution to the crisis that has lasted too long.

I would like to welcome here Mr. Pierre Schori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. António Monteiro, High Representative for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire, for their invaluable contribution to bringing peace and stability back to Côte d'Ivoire.

While we welcome the excellent sixth progress report, which covers all of the conditions that must be met if peace and stability are to return to my country, I would, nevertheless, like to offer a few comments, which in no way call into question the substance of that report.

The general tone of the report would suggest that it does not take sufficiently into account the fact that Côte d'Ivoire has been at war for three years with consequences that we all know. The northern and western half of the country is occupied. There are more small arms and light weapons in circulation and there is a virtual absence of the State in the occupied area. People are simply frustrated because the crisis has bogged down and because they are suffering on account of this. The rebels keep delaying laying down their arms and this, despite all the sacrifices made by the President in the name of the people of Côte d'Ivoire.

My delegation would reserve the right to convey to the Secretary-General in due course the observations

of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire on his sixth report. Here, I would simply like to reiterate my Government's commitment to ensure safety for goods and persons and freedom of movement for the impartial forces. As members know, major security measures were taken inter alia after the deadly attacks in Guitrozon and Petit Duékoué, in the western part of the country, and in Anyama and Agoville, north of Abijan.

Turning to the decisions taken by the 40th meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, those decisions support the Government's constant position reflected in the Ivorian constitution. As the presidential election could not be held, primarily because the rebels are still in arms and the country is still divided, the President of the Republic will remain in office until the new president is sworn in.

The arrangements for government proposed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union will, we are sure, make it possible for the peace process to continue. Today, it is blocked primarily with respect to the process of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR).

My delegation strongly hopes that the decisions of the African Union will be endorsed by the Security Council. Discussions on what some call a "constitutional vacuum" must be ended so that all the parties can get down to work to prepare for free and transparent elections — the only way out of this crisis — on the basis of the various agreements, particularly the road map in the 6 April 2005 Pretoria Agreement and the 29 June 2005 Pretoria Declaration.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. Following the adjournment of this meeting, a private meeting of the Security Council will be held to continue our discussion of the item.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.